Alkalinity and Salinity in the Soil

132. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the levels of alkalinity and salinity of soil/land have increased due to regular and excessive use of chemical fertilizers;

(b) if so, the steps being taken by Government to reduce the levels of alkalinity and salinity of land;

(c) whether the discontinuance of chemical fertilizers and use of traditional cow-dung and other bio-manures would result in fall in foodgrain production; and

(d) if so, the method by which Government proposes to enhance production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) The area affected by alkalinity and salinity has increased due to imbalanced and indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers and unscientific use of soil and water resources.

(b) A new scheme, namely, National Project on Management of Soil Health and Fertility (NPMSHF) has been introduced during 2008-09 to promote soil test based balanced and judicious use of chemical fertilizer in conjunction with organic manure and bio-fertilizer. Financial assistance is also provided for reclamation and development of both alkali and acid soils under various programmes.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The Government is promoting Integrated Nutrient Management (INM) envisaging conjunctive use of both inorganic and organic sources of nutrients to sustain good soil health and higher crop productivity in the country.

Shortfall in production of paddy due to drought

133. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) how many districts have been declared drought affected, State-wise and what kind of helps are being extended by the Centre to these States for relief and rehabilitation;

(b) whether it is a fact that there is a shortfall in the paddy sowing in the country due to the scanty rainfall and drought situation; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and expected shortfall in the paddy production thereby;

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) 12 States, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh have declared 300 districts as affected by drought/scarcity/drought-like situation. State-wise details are indicated below:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi